



Statement of Senator Feinstein On Birthday of Aung San Suu Kyi
June 17, 2005

Washington, DC – On the 60th Birthday of Burmese Democracy Leader Aung San Suu Kyi, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today called upon the military junta to release Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners immediately and unconditionally. The following is Feinstein's statement:

“On Sunday June 19, 2005, former Nobel Peace Recipient, Aung San Suu Kyi, will celebrate her 60th birthday. My thoughts, prayers, and best wishes go out to her on this momentous occasion.

Sadly, Suu Kyi will celebrate yet another birthday under house arrest. In total, she will have spent 2,523 days in detention. Burma's ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council, has gone to extraordinary lengths to prevent Suu Kyi from assuming her rightful place as the head of Burma's democracy movement. She has spent the better part of the past 15 years imprisoned or under house arrest. In May, 2003, government sponsored paramilitary thugs attacked a motorcade carrying Suu Kyi and members of her National League for Democracy.

This brutal regime knows as we do that the vast majority of the Burmese people still look to Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy as the legitimate leaders of Burma and a beacon of hope for a future based on democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. They still remember that it was the NLD that overwhelmingly won parliamentary elections in 1990, results that were soon nullified by the military junta.

No matter what tragedy and injustice that has befallen her, Suu Kyi has remained resolute in her determination to bring freedom and representative government to the Burmese people. Indeed, she is an inspiration for all of us who value these basic human rights that far too often we take for granted. On her birthday, let us renew our efforts to stand in solidarity with the Burmese people and bring about true change in their country.

I urge Congress to pass a renewal of the import sanctions against Burma. I urge the United Nations Security Council to immediately address the situation in Burma and the threat the regime poses not only to its people but the region as a whole. I urge members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to put additional pressure on Rangoon to engage in true national dialogue aimed at restoring democratic government.

And finally, we must all stand together and demand that Suu Kyi and all political prisoners in Burma be released immediately and unconditionally. I look forward to the day when we will be able to celebrate Suu Kyi's birthday in a free and democratic Burma."

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